I. Direct evaluation of student ability or student learning

A. Identify the learning outcome(s) assessed this academic year.

This project assessed the performance of incoming undergraduate music majors who took the online MUS 107 – Guide to Music Theory course during the 2013 summer term. The course we are assessing is designed for students who have limited experience with music fundamentals and need additional help in preparing for MUS 110 – Musicianship I. Students who take the course work toward improving their understanding of fundamentals of music theory through online lectures, readings and exercises. The instructor regularly monitors student progress and provides individualized feedback through graded assignments, quizzes and tests. Our goal is to make some initial observations in terms of the impact of this preparatory class on student performance in MUS 110.

B. Identify and/or describe the assessment and the student group(s) assessed (e.g. freshmen, juniors, grad students). Additionally, as appropriate, please comment on the extent that on-line learning was included in the assessment.

All incoming undergraduate students in the School of Music are required to take the Musicianship Audition Quiz at the time of their auditions. This quiz assesses understanding of fundamental concepts of music theory, such as note-reading, clef reading, interval identification, scale identification, etc. A total of 70 students took the quiz in 2013.

Students whose scores on this quiz fall below a passing threshold, or who show a pronounced weakness in a particular area are required to take MUS 107. This course was implemented in the summer of 2013. Of the 70 students who took the quiz in 2013, 8 (11.4%) fell below the passing threshold and were required to take MUS 107 during the summer preceding their first quarter at DePaul.
Assessment of student performance in MUS 107 was conducted in three ways:
1. We compiled the test results and final grades for Mus 110 of all incoming students who were required to take the course.
2. The instructor and students were personally interviewed about the course following completion of MUS 110. The same instructor taught MUS 107 and MUS 110, and was consequently able to provide meaningful comparative analysis of student performance in both courses. The students and the instructor provided feedback on the value and outcome of their experience in MUS 107, and on the impact it had on student performance in MUS 110. They also reflected on possible improvements that could be made to strengthen the course.

Online learning was a central aspect of this course. The course is offered online in the summer and live during the regular academic year. The online version is offered only during the summer session so that it can be available to students who originate outside the Chicago area before they arrive on campus for their initial quarter of study at DePaul.

C. What did you learn from the assessment?

In our initial look at the outcomes of this course, students who took the course showed the following results:
• 7 of the 8 (87.5%) students who took MUS 107 passed MUS 110 with a C+ or better. The student who did not pass MUS 110 had difficulty completing all of the assignments.
• Seven students were interviewed and there was consensus on the following aspects of the course:
  1. All found the website easy to access and user-friendly.
  2. All found the course to be of value and an important preparation for required fall quarter musicianship coursework.
We were unable to locate the student who was not interviewed at the time interviews were conducted. We felt, however, that the course was clearly beneficial for this student due to the fact that he had the highest score of all 8 students on the diagnostic exam for MUS 110 in the fall, and was able to place into the intermediate section (Section 102) of this course.
• Students who were interviewed made recommended the following improvements:
  1. More explanation of topics and more details
  2. More drills
  3. More content – “go farther” in terms of actual material
  4. Make it possible to return to drills later in the curriculum
  5. Expand course to 10 weeks
• Instructor was also interviewed and provided the following observations about the course:
  1. The five-week session is an adequate length.
  2. The course was an adequate introduction but students did not always retain the information or skills covered in the class.
3. The students who took MUS 107 still seemed to remain somewhat behind the more experiences members of MUS 110, but, in most cases, were able to successfully complete the work required of them.

- Instructor suggested the following improvements:
  1. More content, including some rudimentary analysis.
  2. More drills for each topic.

D. In an effort to help DePaul provide authentic assessment information about student learning at the school/college and university level to our accreditors, the HLC-NCA, please provide the following information about this assessment project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning outcome(s) assessed</th>
<th>a: # of students assessed</th>
<th>b: # of students with acceptable or better performance</th>
<th>% students with acceptable or better performance (b/a x 100)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved understanding of fundamentals in music theory</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>87.5 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. To what extent are you satisfied with the overall level of knowledge and/or ability reflected in the above percentage(s)? Please provide some brief commentary on your expectations as you embarked on this project, and the extent to which these results did or did not meet them.

The percentage above suggests that the outcome of the course was extremely satisfactory. The group of students we assessed represents a segment of most musicianship classes who are likely to struggle significantly with the material for these courses. Students who fall into this category upon admission to the School of Music tend to pass musicianship courses marginally or not at all. In all cases, with only one exception, this group of students earned better than expected grades in MUS 110. The student who failed Mus 110 did so due to missed assignments and was correspondingly behind in her progress. It was our expectation that the head start this course provides would benefit students who have difficulty with this material by giving them the extra practice and experience they need to be able to keep up with MUS 110. The results we found support this conclusion strongly.
E. Based on what you learned, what actions did-or will-you take or consider?

1. MUS 107 was required of the students who scored lowest on the audition quiz, a total of 8 out of 70 incoming students. We learned that this course was beneficial in preparing 87.5% of the students in this group for MUS 110. Based on this conclusion, the committee agreed that MUS 107 could be “recommended but optional” for incoming students who pass the audition quiz but demonstrate weakness in some areas. We feel that students in this position would clearly benefit from additional introductory exposure to the material in advance of taking MUS 110.

2. Include a disclaimer on the entrance exam that gives notice that students may be asked to take a remedial course based on the outcome of the exam.

F. Are follow-up studies planned?

Yes. The School of Music will continue to monitor the progress of incoming students who take the online iteration of MUS 107 during the summer preceding their initial autumn quarter.

G. What can the College do to help? What can the University do?

We can recommend three possible ways that the School of Music or the University could provide additional support for this program.

1. Create the possibility for students in MUS 107 to have face-to-face meetings as a class or with the instructor for students who are close enough to campus or have access to technology that can support this. This would be a particularly beneficial in helping students to practice the material beyond the scope of the class assignments.

2. It would be helpful to offer additional help sessions outside of class for students in MUS 110 who took MUS 107. Some additional focus on this material would be extremely beneficial in helping this group of students gain greater fluency with the material they are expected to cover in MUS 110.

3. Make the course materials covered in MUS 107 available beyond the timeframe of the class. This would give the students who take MUS 107 a familiar set of resources that they can use to review material covered in MUS 107 while they are taking MUS 110.

H. What actions, if any, did you take based on last year’s assessment findings?

TLA Committee members reviewed learning outcomes in all areas with program chairs to assess their alignment with university learning outcomes.